

CLAIMS

Sub
A1
1. A method of transmitting accounting records in an accounting system comprising:

- collecting data by a data collector associated with a network device and to produce normalized accounting records from the data; and
- transmitting the records to first and second flow aggregation processes, with transmitting further comprising for each flow aggregation process:
 - storing in the data collector the normalized records;
 - transmitting the normalized records to the flow aggregation process and
 - awaiting an acknowledgment signal from the flow aggregation process that the flow aggregation process received the records before discarding the records sent to the flow aggregation process; and if the data collector determines that the flow aggregation process is not operating, the data collector;
 - continuing to collect and store records from the network device for future transmission to that flow aggregation process, if the data collector does not receive an acknowledgment signal in response to transmitting the records to the flow aggregation process; and
 - determining an error relating to the first flow aggregation process, and causing aggregate reports from the second flow aggregation process to be sent to the accounting

module in place of the aggregate reports from the first flow aggregation process.

2. A system comprising:

a first flow aggregation process, connected to a plurality of data collectors, wherein the data collectors collect data from network devices, and send the collected data to the first flow aggregation process and dispose of the collected data only after receiving an acknowledgment that the data has been received, with the first flow aggregation process processes the data to generate aggregated records; and

a second flow aggregation process, connected to the data collectors, wherein the data collectors send the collected data to the second flow aggregation process, and dispose of the collected data only after receiving an acknowledgment that the data has been received, with the second flow aggregation process processes the data to generate aggregated records and

an error detection module detecting an error relating to the first flow aggregation process, and causing the aggregate reports from the second flow aggregation process to be sent to the accounting module in place of the aggregate reports from the first flow aggregation process.

add A2